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Flunking the Climate Change Test: De Santis, the Republicans, and the Weather Channel



by AndySchmookler

Community (This content is not subject to review by Daily Kos staff prior to publication.)

🕒 Tuesday, October 08, 2024 at 8:07:39a PDT

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When I was growing up in Minnesota, the local TV stations would come on at 10 PM with a half hour of “News, Weather, and Sports”: 15 minutes of news, a quick 5 minutes of weather, then 10 minutes of sports.

The general population cared enough about the weather to want to hear a quick forecast, and the farmers wanted to know enough to be able to make hay while the sun shines. But in general, except in rare circumstances like when some tornado-producing system might be barreling toward us across the prairies to our west, weather remained a pretty peripheral concern.

Times have changed, because earth’s climate has changed: extreme “weather” events have become more frequent and more extreme. Now, the “Weather,” is often headline “News.”

Like when catastrophic Hurricane Helene recently struck the United States.

As Helene approached landfall at Florida's "Big Bend," I followed developments on the Weather Channel. The high-point of the coverage was a long – and most impressive -- interview of Florida Governor Ron De Santis.

De Santis was impressive in his mastery of both the geography (all the towns and counties threatened) and the necessary guidance for the citizens (things like, don't be lured into thinking the emergency over when the eye of the hurricane passing over brings momentary calm).

There was one aspect of this lengthy interview, however, that made a less favorable impression. Not once was there any mention of the wider picture of which **There are no unread comments at this time.** pattern of increasingly extreme weather arising out of our ongoing disruption of the earth's climate.

But, one might say in defense, this interview concerned an immediate, emergency situation. The Governor was there to help his constituents to protect themselves from the coming hurricane. Why distract from the *immediate necessities* to call attention to the *long-term challenge* that human civilization is now required to meet for our collective safety and survival?

On the other hand, what better time to use the "teachable moment" that this extreme weather event provides?

Surely, part of meeting our larger challenge is *educating the public* about the essential need to address the problems created by our

civilization's disrupting the climate system of the only planet we have. As this catastrophic storm approached – an *extreme weather event* that would kill over 200 Americans, and do more than \$150 billion in damages to property – was **the perfect time to advance the public's understanding of the enormous stakes.**

So couldn't the interviewer and the Governor spend only *almost* all of their time dealing with the immediate emergency, while giving *a little* time to utilizing that teachable moment?

After all, the Weather Channel was reaching a national audience, not just the people of the Big Bend of Florida. (And never is that national audience larger than at such moments when the Weather has become the headline News.)

Ah, but the inte **There are no unread comments at this time.** nor, but to a climate-denying extremist -- Governor De Santis -- who lately gained some notoriety by decreeing that *all mentions of climate change must be deleted from all of Florida's laws.*

(Which is a remarkable thing to do for the Governor of a state that sticks out into the bathtub-warm Gulf of Mexico, whose heat is increasing the destructiveness of hurricanes. And a state that's especially threatened by the rise in the sea levels caused by "global warming's" melting the earth's glaciers and the Antarctic ice sheets.)

But it wasn't just the De Santis interview. Climate got no mention in the rest of the coverage I saw.

On the whole, *it seems that they'd much rather stick to the "Weather" and avoid the "Climate."* And one can see why: **"Climate" is**

controversial, and therefore a threat to revenue.

It's not just De Santis: in his climate denial, De Santis is representative of his whole political party.

America's Republican Party has had the distinction -- for decades -- of *denying the findings of climate scientists, and blocking action to heed their warnings, more fiercely than any other political party in any other advanced democratic nation.*

Because the Republicans have generated "controversy" over the reality of one of the most consequential developments in human history, a business (like the Weather Channel) will want to stay away from the battle, take no sides, not drive away any part of its revenue sources.

So they go deep into the denial of the larger, long-unfolding story of a civilization that endangered itself by destabilizing the planet's climate.

There are no unread comments at this time.

So, as is all too typical of our corporate system, the corporation chose the pursuit of profit at the expense of the clear public good. The Weather Channel passes up its opportunity play the historically urgent role of educating the American public so that understands the urgent challenge we face of averting a future in which the earth's extreme weather brings catastrophes down upon human civilization—of which Helene and Milton are giving us a glimpse. So that the public will demand the kind of response to this challenge that the situation calls for.

All giving us a glimpse into our lamentable situation:

- Humankind faces what has been called the most serious challenge we have ever confronted as a species.
- One of our political parties has long since chosen to do the bidding of a fossil fuel industry that is willing to sacrifice our children and grandchildren for its own short-term profits.
- And then another corporation – the Weather Channel -- looks to its own bottom line, rather than focusing on the urgent need to educate the public so that there will be popular support for the serious actions the human future requires us to make.

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AndySchmookler

AUTHOR

Oct 08, 2024 at 09:07:42 AM

▼

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Gardening Toad

Oct 08, 2024 at 09:20:34 AM

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**McGovern78**

Oct 08, 2024 at 09:29:30 AM

It's the *Sunshine State* — we don't have weather.

1 Reply 8 Recommend

**Jas Popeye ► McGovern78**

Oct 08, 2024 at 04:59:07 PM

LMFAO.....don't we wish!

The reason we don't talk about climate change during a hurricane is the same reason we don't talk about gun control during a mass shooting.

"Now is not the time" bullshit from the reThugs. For them it's never the time and they keep screwing us all forever. We have to kill their BS and establish "NOW is the time" to talk and resolve

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**McGovern78 ► Jas Popeye**

Oct 10, 2024 at 06:30:55 AM

Got 😊 Insurance?



1 Reply 1 Recommend



Jas Popeye ► McGovern78

Oct 10, 2024 at 10:25:03 AM



Sadly no amount of insurance can cover humans' stupidity.

I have ins where required or vital, otherwise no, I self insure.

0 Replies 0 Recommend



Mackinac

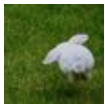
Oct 08, 2024 at 09:34:40 AM



It'll take a season with 5+ of these sized hurricanes slamming into Tampa/major population centers to get people to wake up. Nothing will change until it's quite literally impossible to rebuild. And then Gov. Desanctimonous will tell the rest of the country how important it is to bail out all the poor Floridians impacted by climate change.

1 Reply 8 Recommend

There are no unread comments at this time.



daddybunny ► Mackinac

Oct 08, 2024 at 12:10:32 PM



No. Just. No.

The words "climate" & "change" will not appear anywhere near each other whenever he speaks unless it is to deny its existence.

0 Replies 2 Recommend



DanielKuhn

Oct 08, 2024 at 09:53:42 AM



I agree, however, the weather channel is more MSM. I don't think that they have climate scientists working there, just meteorologists that describe the weather. We do have as part of NOAA, the National Weather Service. This department has many climate scientists. The problem is, about 40% of our population don't care to hear about science of any kind. After all they have their Bible. I am very worried about this friend and her husband who live in Sarasota. They waited and waited and now they are stuck. But she goes "God will decide". It is as if someone had been warned that his car brakes were so worn that she could lose them and crash and die. Instead of fixing the brakes "God will decide". Yes, this is a simplistic look at it, but she happens to be a 7th Adventist (they don't believe in science).

2 Replies 7 Recommend**Gardening Toad ▶ DanielKuhn**

Oct 08, 2024 at 10:37:23 AM

40% of folks are rarely preventing the other 60% from taking action, even dramatic action.

1 Reply 3 Recommend**Clutch Cargo ▶ Gardening Toad**

Oct 08, 2024 at 10:58:47 AM

41% of the members of the US Senate can prevent the Senate from taking an action supported by the other 59%, thanks to the filibuster. And those Senators in the recalcitrant 41% might only represent about 11% of the US population, because the least populous 21 states have about 35 million people in a nation of about 335 million people. In actual practice, the 41% are more likely to represent about 20% to 30% of the population, but that's still a rather extreme example of minority rule.

1 Reply 4 Recommend**There are no unread comments at this time.**

Oct 08, 2024 at 11:05:02 AM

Those Senators are still not preventing the rest of us from taking even very extreme climate action on a state, region, community, neighborhood, and personal level. They just aren't.

But it's a handy excuse for not doing what we could be doing.

1 Reply 1 Recommend**daddybunny ▶ Gardening Toad**

Oct 08, 2024 at 12:18:35 PM

I'll remind you that the same cadre of true believers on the State level can prevent legislative action even in legislatures without the filibuster rule. How? They all walk out, go out of State to hide, thus preventing a quorum from being met so the legislature cannot pass anything, much less the bill that prompted the walkout. It happened in TX & in OR.

0 Replies 2 Recommend

**jstjeff ► DanielKuhn**

Oct 08, 2024 at 11:42:14 AM



well, living in the reddest part of florida and being surrounded by these people, I can say that climate denial has absolutely noting to do with Jesus. It has everything to do with, them having no interest in paying to fix the problem. This is cultural republican, low taxes, I don't give a flip what happens to anyone else that doesn't look like me or shares my narrow self centered view on life.

0 Replies **4** Recommend**BehindTheLines**

Oct 08, 2024 at 10:54:55 AM



I'm amazed over the last 5 years how much the weather channel does cover climate change. Rapid intesification, warmer than normal sea currents, more moisture being held in warmer air. Lots of explainer segments. Weather Nation won't even use the word. I'm amazed the rethuglicains don't have a boycott TWC movement.

0 Replies **6** Recommend**mungley**

Oct 08, 2024 at 10:56:59 AM

**There are no unread comments at this time.**

It would have been nice if during Helene DeSantis and the Weather Channel had mentioned that this can happen again.

Are we to treat Milton as an "isolated" event a week after the last "isolated" event?

It's like the MSM treating mass shooters as "lone wolves" and not part of a societal problem.

0 Replies **10** Recommend**Elpablo**

Oct 08, 2024 at 11:56:54 AM



In a half-hearted defense of The Weather Channel: 30+% of their potential audience flat-out denies climate change science is real and are rabid in their willingness to express that denial, 20%- is freaked out about the climate crisis and is trying to mitigate its worst effects, and the remaining 50% is concerned about climate change and wants something done about it, as long as the solutions don't cost them anything, make then feel guilty, or require them to change their high-consumption lifestyles.*

With stats like that, you can see why a profit-driven company would tip toe around the elephant in the room.

*Percentages are rough estimates.

0 Replies 2 Recommend



SpaceElevator

Oct 08, 2024 at 12:12:59 PM



Unfortunately harping on climate change during severe weather can be a ‘chicken little cry’ to many people. I remember extreme heat waves, ice storms, blizzards and floods from my youth. Many other people do too, and are not really impressed, with hurricanes during hurricane season, and blizzards in the winter.

The real affects and proof that things are not normal are long term. Ocean temperatures off the charts, melting of glaciers, and sea ice. Corral reef dying from slight temperature rises, will lead to loss of fishing nurseries. CO2 and methane hydrates now sequestered in solution in seawater, will bubble out as the ocean warms creating a positive feedback loop. Fossil fuel producers have been actively catapulting the propaganda, that none of this is anything to worry about, even though they have known since the 1970’s about CO2 and the greenhouse affect.

There are no unread comments at this time.

It is maddening.

1 Reply 1 Recommend



democratos ▶ SpaceElevator

Oct 08, 2024 at 02:27:49 PM



affect → effect (twice)

1 Reply 1 Recommend



SpaceElevator ▶ democratos

Oct 08, 2024 at 03:40:27 PM



D’oh!

0 Replies 0 Recommend



WTFLOL1

Oct 08, 2024 at 03:35:29 PM



Yes!

Agree 100%!

0 Replies 0 Recommend



notasleep

Oct 08, 2024 at 04:05:24 PM



Several years ago I told my children that when I was growing up we had the news and the weather. Then I told them that for you the weather will be the news. It is sad but true..

0 Replies 1 Recommend



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